

GETTING READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS- 2021

THE WHO, WHAT, WHEN, AND WHERE OF HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

Who is going to do this - are you doing this alone or with someone else?

What are you doing - is this a cocktail party, dinner party or something else?

When are you doing this - next week, next month or later?

Where are you doing this - at your home; someone else's home; or a rental/commercial location?

Once you have answered the above questions, you can begin to develop an action plan. The plan should include the following:

A time line – how much time do you have to plan, shop, cook and execute?

A guest list – who is coming, their ages, their dietary needs, if any, and most importantly, are they big eaters or delicate pickers?

A menu – what are you thinking of serving and can you prepare it yourself or do you need help? How much can be done in advance and how much must be done just prior to the event? Do you have the skill, the equipment and the necessary refrigeration/cooking appliances you will need to pull this off?

Equipment/supply list – do you have everything you will need for this event? Do you need to borrow some items or do you need to rent things, such as plates, glasses, serving pieces, silverware, tableware, cooking utensils, pots and pans? What are you thinking in the way of table decorations?

Finally cost – how much do you think this will cost and do you have a budget? What happens if expenses go over your budget?

QUICK COMMENTS RE: HOSTING A HOLIDAY PARTY

1. Never attempt a menu with all new recipes.
2. Let the season be your inspiration
3. Review guest list for food allergies
4. Something for everyone, young and old
5. How the ingredients are prepared? Hot/Cold/Bland/Spicy
6. Varied mix of hors d'oeuvres
7. Include at least 2 hot/warm pieces in the cooler months
8. We are heartier eaters in the colder months
9. Plated or passed? Do you have enough platters, chairs, helpers?
10. Take total number of napkins you think you need and triple it
11. Do you have several waste baskets available for your guests to put things in? Who is going to empty them during the event?
12. Time of day of party. Will your guests have eaten prior to the event or do they expect you to feed them?

**BASIC RULE OF THUMB: 6 PIECES OF FOOD PER GUEST FOR THE FIRST HOUR
4 PIECES OF PER GUEST FOR EACH SUBSEQUENT HOUR**

For an event for 25 guests, lasting four hours, that is 450 pieces of food!

2 shopping lists, one for non-perishables and one for perishables

Keep garnishes simple. If using herbs or other natural items, especially items taken from your own garden, always check for bugs. Make sure anything put out to garnish is eatable.

Relax and have fun!!!!

EASY ENTERTAINING FOOTNOTES AND CHECK LISTS

Party Planning Check List:

- Pick a reason
- Set a date
- Determine the style
- Invite the guests
- Create the ambience
- Prepare the menu
- Relax and enjoy the party

Timing the Invitation

Casual Dinner or Party:

Invitation should arrive at least one week in advance.

Formal or Large Party:

Invitation should arrive at least two weeks in advance.

Holiday or Special-Occasion Party:

Invitation should arrive one – two weeks in advance.

Serving Styles:

Restaurant-Style Service:

Appropriate for more formal occasions

Dishes are individually plated in the kitchen and brought to the table

A good idea when you have a small table that cannot hold many platters

Family-Style Service:

Best suited to informal occasions

Food is arranged on large platters and brought to the table

Guests serve themselves at the table

Buffet Service:

Works well for both formal and casual meals, especially for large groups
Food is arranged on a sideboard or at multiple locations
Guests serve themselves

Cocktail Parties:

Best suited to formal occasions, especially larger groups
Food is passed on trays
Good for people with busy schedules

Calculating Beverage Quantities:

Bottled Water – 1 quart for every 2 guests

Wine or Sparkling Wine – 1 bottle for every 2 or 3 wine drinkers

Beer – 2 or 3 bottles for every beer drinker

Liquor – 1 quart for every 10 to 12 drinkers

Basic bar checklist:

Vodka

Gin

Scotch and bourbon whiskeys

Aperitifs such as Campari or Lillet

Red and white wines

Club soda and tonic

Soft drinks and sparkling water

Orange, pineapple, and cranberry juices

Lemon and lime wedges

Ice

Matching food and Wine:

Type of Food

Wine Match

Salty snack foods

Sparkling wines such as Champagne, Prosecco, California sparkling wines

Spicy, salty, or smoked dishes

Fruity, low-alcohol wines such as Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir

Rich or fatty dishes

Full-bodied wines such as Chardonnay, Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Syrah

Highly acidic dishes

High-acid wines such as Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel, Chianti

Desserts

Sweet wines, with the wine at least as sweet as the dish such as Sauternes, Vin Santo, Muscat

Cheese

Goat's Milk – White wines such as Sauvignon Blanc Sancerre
Double-or-triple crème cheeses – Fruity or sweet red wines such as a young Pinot Noir, tawny Port
Blue cheeses – Sweet white wine such as Sauternes

PLANNING THE MENU

When you have settled on the scope and style of your party, it is time to move on to the menu. This may seem like a big hurdle, especially if you are an inexperienced cook, but it is not as difficult as you might think. That's because the decisions you have made about the occasion, guests, and style have largely defined and focused the menu already. As you start to select which recipes to prepare, three simple questions will help: What is the occasion? What is the season? What is realistic?

The occasion sets the tone of the food. Holidays, for example, often call for traditional recipes. Formal meals usually include more than one course, while casual entertaining generally requires few dishes. It's helpful to remember that most recipes can be made to work for all kinds of gatherings. Carrot Soup with Bacon and Chestnut Cream served in a fine porcelain bowl and topped with a special garnish makes a festive first course for an elegant dinner, but it can also be served in a rustic pottery soup plate with a salad and bread for a casual supper. So, rather than thinking immediately about recipes, begin by asking yourself what kinds of contrasting and complementary flavor, colors, texture, and ingredients feel appropriate for the style and mood of your occasion.

Seasonality is perhaps the single most helpful guide in deciding what to serve at a party. From asparagus in the spring to crab in the winter, choosing seasonal ingredients can do a lot of the work of menu planning for you. Whether you prepare them to showcase their flavor or use them to create more elaborate dishes, you can't miss. Start with a visit to a good grocery store or farmers market for inspiration. See what looks and tastes especially good, and jot down a few notes as you go. Think about what kinds of dishes fit the weather, too: chilled soup on a hot day, a hearty braises for a winter night.

Be realistic. Take a moment to evaluate how much time you'll have, your budget, your skill level, the number of guests, and the limitations of your kitchen. These constraints do not have to put a damper on your party, as long as you recognize them in advance and plan accordingly. Build in whatever shortcuts you need, including serving a store-bought appetizer or dessert or using ready-made ingredients such as puff pastry, pesto, or caramel sauce. Consider serving a main course that can be made ahead of time, and perhaps even asking friends to bring

part of the meal. Remember that the more guests you invite, the simpler the menu should be.

One last thing – If you are considering cooking and entertaining on a regular basis, then I would recommend that you invest in a Culinary Dictionary. While some cookbooks do have a glossary in the rear of the book, most do not cover the entire scope of culinary terminology. I recommend the following:

The Chef's Companion – A Concise Dictionary of Culinary Terms: written by Elizabeth Riely and published by John Wiley & sons, Inc. You can check Amazon for this book or others of a similar nature.

Here are some cookies and treats for the Holidays

NOTE: ALL BUTTER USED IN THESE RECIPES IS SALT-FREE BUTTER

SOUR CREAM CHERRY BARS

Crust:

2 cups all-purpose flour
2/3 cup sugar
2/3 cup butter, softened

Filling:

1 can (21 oz.) cherry fruit filling
¾ cup dairy sour cream
2 teaspoons almond extract
¾ cup sliced toasted almonds

Heat oven to 350-degrees; for crust, in large mixer bowl, combine all crust ingredients. Beat at low speed, scraping bowl often, until mixture is crumbly, 2 to 3 minutes. Press on bottom of ungreased 13x9x2 inch baking pan. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until lightly browned around edges.

For filling, in medium bowl stir together fruit filling, sour cream and almond extract. Spread over hot crust. Sprinkle nuts over top. Continue baking for 15 to 20 minutes or until edges are bubbly. Cool completely, cut into bars and enjoy. Store leftover covered, in refrigerator. Makes about 3 dozen

COCONUT SNOWDROPS

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup flaked coconut
½ cup granulated sugar
1 cup butter, softened

¼ cup milk
1 egg
1 tablespoon vanilla
powdered sugar, for sprinkling

Heat the oven to 350-degrees. In large mixer bowl, combine flour, coconut, granulated sugar, butter, milk, egg and vanilla. Beat at low speed, scraping bowl often, until well mixed, 1 to 2 minutes. Drop rounded teaspoonful of dough 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets; Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, or until edges are lightly browned. Remove immediately. Cool completely; sprinkle with powdered sugar. Makes about 3 dozen cookies

SNOWBALL COOKIES

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups finely chopped pecans
¼ cup granulated sugar
1 cup butter, softened

1 teaspoon vanilla
Powdered sugar for rolling

Heat oven to 325-degrees; then in large mixer bowl, combine flour, nuts, granulated sugar, butter and vanilla. Beat at low speed, scraping bowl often, until well mixed, 3 to 4 minutes. Shape rounded teaspoonful of dough into 1-inch balls. Place on ungreased cookie sheets; bake for 18 to 25 minutes, or

until very lightly browned. Remove immediately, roll in powdered sugar while still warm and again when cool. Makes about 3 dozen snowball cookies

COOKIE JAR COOKIES

3 ½ cups all-purpose flour	1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup granulated sugar	½ teaspoon salt
1 cup firmly packed brown sugar	1 cup quick-cooking oats
2 cups softened butter	1 cup crisp rice cereal
1 egg	1 cup flaked coconut
1 teaspoon cream of tartar	½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Preheat the oven to 350-degrees. In large mixer bowl, combine flour, granulated sugar, brown sugar, butter, egg, cream of tartar, baking soda and salt. Beat at low speed, scraping bowl often, until well mixed, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in oats, cereal, coconut and nuts. Mix, then drop rounded tablespoonful of dough 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake cookies for 13 to 16 minutes, or until lightly browned. Remove immediately, cool. This makes about 4 dozen cookies.

CHERRY SCOTCHIES

2 cups all-purpose flour	½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup firmly packed brown sugar	2 teaspoons vanilla
½ cup flaked coconut	½ cup chopped maraschino cherries, drained
¾ cup softened butter	2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 egg	1 cup butterscotch chips
1 teaspoon baking powder	Powdered sugar, for sprinkling

Preheat oven to 375-degrees. In a large mixer bowl, combine 2 cups flour, brown sugar, coconut, butter, egg, baking powder, salt and vanilla. Beat at low speed, scraping bowl often, until well mixed, 1 to 2 minutes. In a small bowl, toss together drained maraschino cherries and 2 tablespoons flour. Stir into the large bowl the tossed cherries and the butterscotch chips. Spread this mixture into a greased and floured 13x9x2 inch baking pan. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until edges are lightly browned; cool completely. Sprinkle with the powdered sugar and cut into bars. Makes about 3 dozen bars

CHOCOLATE PIXIES

¼ cup butter	4 eggs
4 squares (1oz. ea.) unsweetened chocolate	2 teaspoons baking powder
2 cups all-purpose flour, divided	½ teaspoon salt
2 cups granulated sugar	½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans
Powdered sugar for rolling	

In a small saucepan, melt butter and chocolate over low heat, 8 to 10 minutes. Cool. In large mixer bowl, combine melted chocolate mixture, 1 cup of the flour, granulated sugar, eggs, baking powder and

salt. Beat at medium speed, scraping bowl often, until well mixed, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in remaining 1 cup flour and the nuts. Cover; refrigerate until firm, at least 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 300-degrees. Shape rounded teaspoonful of dough into 1-inch balls; roll in powdered sugar. Place 2 inches apart on greased cookie sheets. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, or until firm to the touch. Remove immediately. Makes about 4 dozen cookies

The following are great to serve with cocktails or for just watching a football game. Enjoy!

ROSEMARY ROASTED CASHEWS

1-1 ½ pounds cashews or mixed nuts
½ teaspoon cayenne (go lightly here)
2 teaspoons salt

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
2 teaspoons brown sugar, dark or light
2 – 2 ½ tablespoons melted butter

Preheat oven to 350-degrees:

Place nuts on an ungreased baking sheet and bake for about 10 minutes or until they are warmed through. Watch that the nuts do not burn. Stir after about 5 minutes. NOTE: let your nose tell you when the nuts are roasting, you should be able to smell them. You can also smell if they are burning.

Meanwhile, combine everything else in a large bowl. As soon as you take the nuts out of the oven, toss them in the bowl until completely coated, keep tossing them to ensure they are all completely coated with the butter/rosemary mixture. This should take about 4 to 5 minutes. Serve warm, if desire. The nuts flavor increases as they cool down. Store in a zip lock bag or other airtight container. This recipe makes about 3 cups of roasted nuts.

Pumpkin Raisin and Walnut Biscotti

Non-stick cooking spray
1 box Pillsbury Pumpkin Flavored Quick Bread & muffin mix
½ cup unsalted butter, melted
2 eggs, room temperature
½ cup Golden Raisins and ½ cup chopped walnuts

Heat oven to 350-degrees; coat a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray or cover with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, combine the quick bread mix, the melted butter and the two eggs. Stir to incorporate, about 25 – 40 strokes with a spoon until mix is moistened and incorporated. Stir in the raisins and walnuts. Mix well.

Divide dough in half, equal parts. Shape each half into an 8 by 2 inch loaf on prepared baking sheet. Chill in refrigerator 30 minutes.

Bake the 2 loaves 25 to 30 minutes (I usually bake for 27 minutes) or until light golden brown. Remove from oven and cool on pan for 15 minutes. Now, remove each loaf, one at a time, to a cutting board and cut each into ¾ inch slices. Place the slices cut-side down and 1-inch apart on same baking sheet. Bake an additional 8, turn and bake an additional 8 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool on a wire rack. Store the cooled biscotti in an air-tight container for up to two weeks. Enjoy!

PULL-APART PARTY LOAF – GOES GREAT WITH COCKTAILS!

1 round 16 -18 ounce loaf round bread	¼ cup butter, melted
1 teaspoon dry ranch dressing mix	½ cup chopped cooked thick-slice bacon
1 small container chopped jalapeno peppers	8-10 oz. grated Cheddar/Monterey Jack cheese
2 teaspoons chopped parsley	Good sprinkling Garlic Powder

Preheat the oven to 350-degrees. Place two 24-inch long pieces aluminum foil, crossing one over the other, on a flat surface, to form a cross.

Cut the bread, using a serrated knife, in a grid pattern, top side down, spacing about 1-inch between rows. Do not cut through the bottom of the crust. Set aside.

Combine the melted butter and the ranch dressing in a medium bowl. Add all the remaining ingredients **except** the parsley, mix well.

Place the sliced loaf in the center of the aluminum foil pieces. Spoon the cheese mixture into the cut areas of the bread. You may have to use your hands to push some mixture into the groves. Use all the cheese mixture. Wrap the foil loosely around the bread. Place it onto an ungreased baking sheet and place in the oven.

Bake for 30 minutes; pull back the foil and continue baking for an additional 5-10 minutes or until the loaf is golden brown and the cheese is melted. Remove from the oven, place on a platter or in a large soup bowl (this keeps the loaf from slipping around while your guests pull the loaf apart), sprinkle on the parsley, if desired, and serve warm.

SAVORY HOLIDAY RECIPES

GLAZED CROWN ROAST OF PORK w/CRANBERRY-CORNBREAD STUFFING

Roast:

- 1 (12-bone) pork Crown roast, about 7 pounds – have butcher tie for you.
- ¼ cup apple jelly
- 2 tablespoons jellied cranberry sauce

Stuffing:

- 3 (6 oz.) packages one-step cornbread stuffing mix
- Butter – unsalted
- Water
- ¾ cup sweetened dried cranberries
- ¾ cup chopped dried apples

Heat oven to 350-degrees: In large saucepan, prepare stuffing mix as directed on package, using butter and water. Stir in cranberries and apples; set aside.

Place pork roast on rack in shallow roasting pan. Fill cavity with as much of the prepared stuffing as it will hold. Cover stuffing and exposed bones loosely with foil. Spray 1-quart casserole dish with nonstick cooking spray and spoon remaining stuffing into sprayed casserole. Cover; refrigerate until 45 minutes before serving time.

Roast the pork for 2 ¼ to 3 hours, allowing 25 to 30 minutes per pound or until an instant read thermometer inserted in center registers 155 degrees.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine the apple jelly and cranberry sauce; mix well. Heat over low heat until the mixture is melted and smooth.

During the last 45 minutes of baking time, brush roast with jelly mixture and bake any remaining stuffing. When finished, remove roast from pan and cover with foil; let stand 15 minutes. Remove foil and cut string from roast; cut between bones and plate. Serve with stuffing from center of roast and additional baked stuffing.

PEPPER-CRUSTED PRIME RIB w/ZINFANDEL SAUCE

Roast:

- 1 (6 lb.) boneless prime or choice beef rib roast
- 3 garlic cloves, sliced
- 1 tablespoon mixed peppercorns, coarsely ground

1 tablespoon mustard seed
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Sauce:

2 tablespoons finely chopped shallots
1 cup res Zinfandel wine
1 (14 oz.) can beef broth
¼ cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons brandy
1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley

Heat oven to 450-degrees: Make shallow slits in surface of beef roast; insert slices of garlic. In small bowl, combine ground peppercorns, mustard seed, Worcestershire sauce and Dijon mustard; mix well. Spread over surface of roast. Place roast on rack in shallow metal roasting pan.

Bake for 15 minutes, and then reduce oven temperature to 350-degrees. Bake an additional 1 ¼ to 1 ½ hours or until an instant read thermometer inserted in center registers 140-degrees for medium-rare.

Remove roast from pan, cover with foil to keep warm. Remove and discard all but 2 tablespoons drippings from pan. Add shallots; cook and stir over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes or until shallots are tender. Add wine; cook over medium-high heat until mixture boils, scraping brown bits from bottom of pan.

In small bowl combine broth and flour; blend well. Stir into wine mixture and cook until mixture comes to a boil; stirring frequently. Boil for 3 minutes or until slightly thickened. Carefully with pan off heat, stir in brandy and mix well. Now slice roast into serving pieces. Serve sauce on the side. Sprinkle individual servings with the chopped parsley.

THREE- POTATO GRATIN

3 medium dark-orange sweet potatoes or yams (1 lb.) peeled
3 medium red-skinned potatoes (1 lb.) unpeeled
3 medium Yukon Gold potatoes (1 lb.) unpeeled
2 cups finely shredded Swiss cheese (8 oz.)
1 cup beef broth
1 teaspoon dried rosemary leaves crushed
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 garlic cloves, minced

Heat oven to 400 degrees; spray a 12 x 8 inch (2 qt.) glass baking dish and a sheet of foil with nonstick cooking spray. Cut all the potatoes into 1/8 inch thick slices. Layer half of the potatoes in sprayed baking dish. Top with half the Swiss cheese. Cover with the remaining potatoes.

In medium saucepan, combine broth, rosemary, pepper and garlic. Bring to a boil and then pour this boiling mixture over the potatoes. Loosely cover with sprayed sheet of foil. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove baking dish from oven and uncover. Sprinkle with the remaining half of cheese. Return baking dish to oven, uncovered, for an additional 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender and the cheese is melted.

BABY SPINACH SALAD w/CRANBERRY VINAIGRETTE

Dressing:

½ cup whole berry cranberry sauce
¼ cup vegetable oil
2 tablespoons orange juice
2 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
¼ teaspoon salt

Salad:

1 (10 oz.) bag fresh baby spinach leaves, washed and de-stemmed
2 avocados, peeled, pitted and sliced
1 tablespoon orange juice
½ cup pomegranate seeds

In a jar with tight-fitting lid, place cranberry sauce, vegetable oil, orange juice, honey, balsamic vinegar and salt. Shake until well blended. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Arrange an assortment of spinach leaves on individual salad plates. Coat avocado slice with 1 tablespoon orange juice; arrange over the spinach leaves. Sprinkle with pomegranate seeds and drizzle salads with the jar dressing, just enough to moisten the leaves.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS EVERYONE

CHEF CAL